1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

SERVING OF FOOD

264 The food was served on mats or in baskets. Roggeveen (186, p. 16) tells
415 us that the natives brought him "a boiled fowl to eat very neatly wrapped round in a kind of rush, clean and hot." G. Forster (83, vol. 1, p. 571) also speaks of matted baskets "full of sweet potatoes."

482 To carry food, and, in general any burden, the Easter Islanders had
492 carrying poles (*amo*) which they balanced on one shoulder. This means of
493 transportation has entirely disappeared and is remembered only by the old people. Today carts or packhorses are used.

FOOD ETIQUETTE

264 Nowadays no particular custom or rite is observed at meals. The women do the cooking assisted occasionally by the men when they have time or feel like helping. No native begins to eat before he has muttered a prayer or [782] crossed himself. Formerly a food offering was made to Haua and Makemake before meals, pronouncing the formula "Ma Haua, ma Makemake."

574 Father Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, pp. 233-236) describes a banquet given for him by a powerful chief of Hotu-iti. The feast was the first sign of friendship shown toward the missionaries by the natives of that part of the island. Since other chiefs on the island had already honored the missionaries with feasts, this chief felt that to maintain his dignity he must give an especially fine one. Therefore he ordered his people to fish and to gather sweet potatoes, bananas, sugar cane, and fowls in abundance.

574 A big oven was dug out and kindled in the morning. When the missionaries arrived
264 they were invited to sit on four stones around the oven and mats were stretched in front of them. The chief asked the missionaries if they were ready to eat, they said that they were, and at a given signal ten men rushed toward the oven and opened it. The best pieces of food were laid on small mats and deposited at the feet of the missionaries. After this, the chief and his friends were served.

"You should have seen," writes Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 237), "the dexterity with which they cleaned the carcass of the chicken from its meat and the avidity with which they devoured the meat with the small bones . . . " To quench their thirst they chewed sugar cane.

The common people stood waiting while the honored guests ate their meal. At a signal from one of the missionaries, they came forward and helped themselves to any food left in front of the guests and in the oven. The women and children were served last. From a delicacy like chicken or fish all they got was the bones to chew and "these bones were already chewed once or twice" (81, vol. 38, pp. 126-127).

The general gaiety of the meal was spoiled by the complaint of a visiting chief that he had not been served according to the rule of etiquette. He was supported by his retainers and the quarrel almost developed into a battle.

After the meal the guests rested in the shade and the day ended with "games and diversions."